

In illustration and support of the theory propounded, I avail myself of the aptitude and critical bearing of some few of the remarks addressed to me in the year 1852, by Colonel, now Brig'r General, M. M., George W. Hughes, whose views are entitled to great weight, because I cannot do justice to this branch of State policy so well as presenting them to your attentive consideration.

"The necessity of finding some substitute for large standing armies, by which an available military force could be placed at the disposal of the Federal Government, and, at the same time, of cultivating the highest order of military science, early attracted the attention of General Washington, on whose recommendation the National Military Academy at West Point was established; and I trust it may be permitted to one of the humblest of its graduates to say, that its results have not disappointed his reasonable expectations. History can probably point to no war, that has been conducted with more skill and science than the conquest of Mexico, by the United States—a fact highly creditable to the military academy—which, beside furnishing from its élèves nearly the entire staff of that army, and a great proportion of the officers of the line, contributed largely to the volunteers, from those it had given to civil life, and who, at the first blast of the trumpet, hastened to offer their services to the country, in any capacity, and were seen doing battle with their fellow-citizens, in every grade, from that of enlisted men to the commanders of regiments and brigades. This institution, by its cultivation and dissemination of military science throughout the land, and furnishing a large surplus of officers beyond the wants of the regular army, for any emergency that may arise, enables us to dispense with any but a small army, barely sufficient to garrison the forts on the sea-coast, and to check the incursions of the border Indian tribes, while it is calculated to form a nucleus for a large increase of regular force in time of war. That important adjunct to an army, and without which its action would be much paralyse, an efficient staff has been carefully attended to in our organization, and is adequate for an army of 60,000 men. We have been able to introduce into our staff departments a division of mental and physical labor unknown to other services, and it is risking little in asserting that, taking it all in all, a better organized, drilled and disciplined army for its numbers, can nowhere be found.

Without entering into the discussion of the question whether regular or volunteer troops, in time of war, are the most efficient and economical, suffice it to say, that it is the settled policy of our Government to rely mainly, in time of war, on its citizen soldiery; and this was the view of Gen. Washington; but he contemplated something more than a mere enrollment and a few holiday musters in the course of a year. He looked to a well drilled, well disciplined and properly organized militia, ready at any moment to take the field and embracing within its ranks every able bodied